

# Luke 1:11-13,18-20,24-25

## God's blessings irrevocable

*And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the alter of incense. And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear gripped him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John."*

*And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this for certain? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; and I have been sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time."*

*And after these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant; and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, "This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take away my disgrace among men."*

There is much that can be learned from this passage of Scripture however I want to dwell on two points in particular. The first is the manner in which the angel confirmed the word of the Lord to Zacharias that was both discipline and blessing, and the second which is Elizabeth having the weight of disgrace removed from her shoulders.

1. I was pondering the manner in which the Lord disciplined Zacharias for his unbelief and was thinking how it was also a great blessing to him. Many times God grants promises to us and though we might be filled with renewed hope and joy at that moment only a few days later or even hours later we can again fall into despair that God will never grant what He has recently given His word on fulfilling. Our faith is so easily unsettled moment by moment and God took care of this doubt in Zacharias by making it impossible for him to forget. Every time he went to speak he was again reminded of the reason why he couldn't. So now during his silence he had plenty of time to reflect and pray regarding the events that God had promised him and that his own speech required that it come to pass. Doubt would never again pass through his lips regarding this promise of God, Amazing isn't it? Mercy mixed with discipline!

2. Many times God's answer to prayer is our vindication before men that we are not crazy for the trust we have placed in Him for whatever challenge it is that we are going through and that we actually have His favor and blessing in all of it. So often He allows us to appear foolish in the sight of our friends and those who are worldly-wise because He delays in the answer that would remove all question from their minds. Elizabeth was struggling because she and her husband faithfully served the Lord and yet what everyone else considered to be God's favor upon such service (having a posterity) God had withheld from her and this beyond normal child-bearing years. However, the appearance could not be farther from the truth. God's special blessing was upon them and she would have a child that would be the witness of Jesus' time upon earth and would do a great work in bringing the hearts of the people back to a state of repentance and love for God. When God set about with his blessing for her He established it in such a way that no one could fail to see that God was with her and this child. Verse 66 says, "*And all who heard them kept them in mind, saying, "What then will this child turn out to be?" For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.*"

These things should cause us to pause next time we start to despair yet again of some answer that we know God has promised to fulfill. We may have to wait, but I guarantee it will be worth the wait!

God bless you all and may He fill you with renewed hope and joy regarding His love and good will towards you! Let us seek Him and serve Him with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength!

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